

A Letter from the Commander



As I reflect over the past three years of my tenure as commander and conductor of The United States Air Force Band, I remember with great pride the many momentous events, anniversaries and historic milestones that we have shared together: the 50th anniversary of World War II, the dedication of the Korean War monument and the incredible festivities throughout the nation as we celebrated the recent 50th

anniversary of your United States Air Force. But as January 1999 dawns here in our nation's capitol, one cannot help but feel an incredible sense of awe and wonder as we celebrate not just the final year of the century, but the end of a millennium. This is the final year of an epoch that saw our planet grow from the chaos and uncertainty of the Middle Ages into the technological, intellectual and artistic wonders of the past several decades. All the more inspiring for us here in Hangar 2, is the overwhelming influence the free world's most powerful Air Force, your Air Force, has had on world and national events as this century and millennium come to a close. It is my fervent hope that as we perform in your community, here in the Washington/Baltimore metropolitan area, or as you hear us on radio or compact disc recording, that you feel as great a sense of pride and accomplishment in the United States Air Force as we do.

But now it is time to roll up our sleeves and start working to make this final year of the 20th century as great and fulfilling as possible. This month, The Concert Band will be recording one of the most difficult and far-reaching CD projects ever. Samuel Barber's "Medea's Dance of Vengeance," Bela Bartok's "The Miraculous Mandarin" and Dmitri Shostakovich's haunting tone poem, "October." These are just a few of the many transcriptions, original compositions and new commissions that will be the subject matter of this double-CD recording project. Please contact your local library and ask them to request a copy of this CD, which will be available in mid-1999.

Other upcoming projects include a String Orchestra CD recording, Concert Band and Singing Sergeants Spring Tour throughout the Southeast, a new tour of "Remembering the Glenn Miller Army Air Forces Orchestra 1943-45" and the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the inception of NATO. We will also be presenting our wildly popular Guest Artist Series. But most importantly we will be supporting you, the American public. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our concerts. And when you come to a concert by your United States Air Force Band, I hope you will be able to experience the pride that I feel as we musically soar to greater heights representing our country and this nation's Air Force.

Lowell E. Graham, Colonel, USAF
Commander and Conductor

SILVER WINGS

"New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new." Samuel Johnson penned this line, and with the dawning of a new year, the quote seems especially relevant.

We are very pleased to announce the arrival of our new female vocalist, TSgt Marie Mindnich. TSgt Mindnich comes to us from the Air Force Band of the Golden West at Travis Air Force Base in California. In addition to her musical talent and experience, TSgt Mindnich is well-versed in Air Force life. Her 14 years in the Air Force have taken her to Sunnyvale Air Force Station in California, Hellinikon Air Base in Greece, McChord Air Force Base in Washington, Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, where she worked aboard the presidential jet, Air Force One. She also toured the world with the Air Force show "Tops in Blue." Welcome aboard!

To put Samuel Johnson's quote into musical terms, Silver Wings will spend ample time in January and February working on repertoire. The group is working to learn some of the brand-new country hits, as well as finding "old chestnuts" to re-work and make our own.

The rewards of our job as Air Force bandsmen are great, and as fun and glamorous as concerts in large venues are, equally fun are our Education Outreach programs at area schools. A mixture of education and entertainment, these programs give children a sampling of what we do. We demonstrate our instruments, play songs for them, and answer their many questions. What an honor it is for us to serve our country by serving our nation's youth!

—MSgt (sel) Chris Kosky